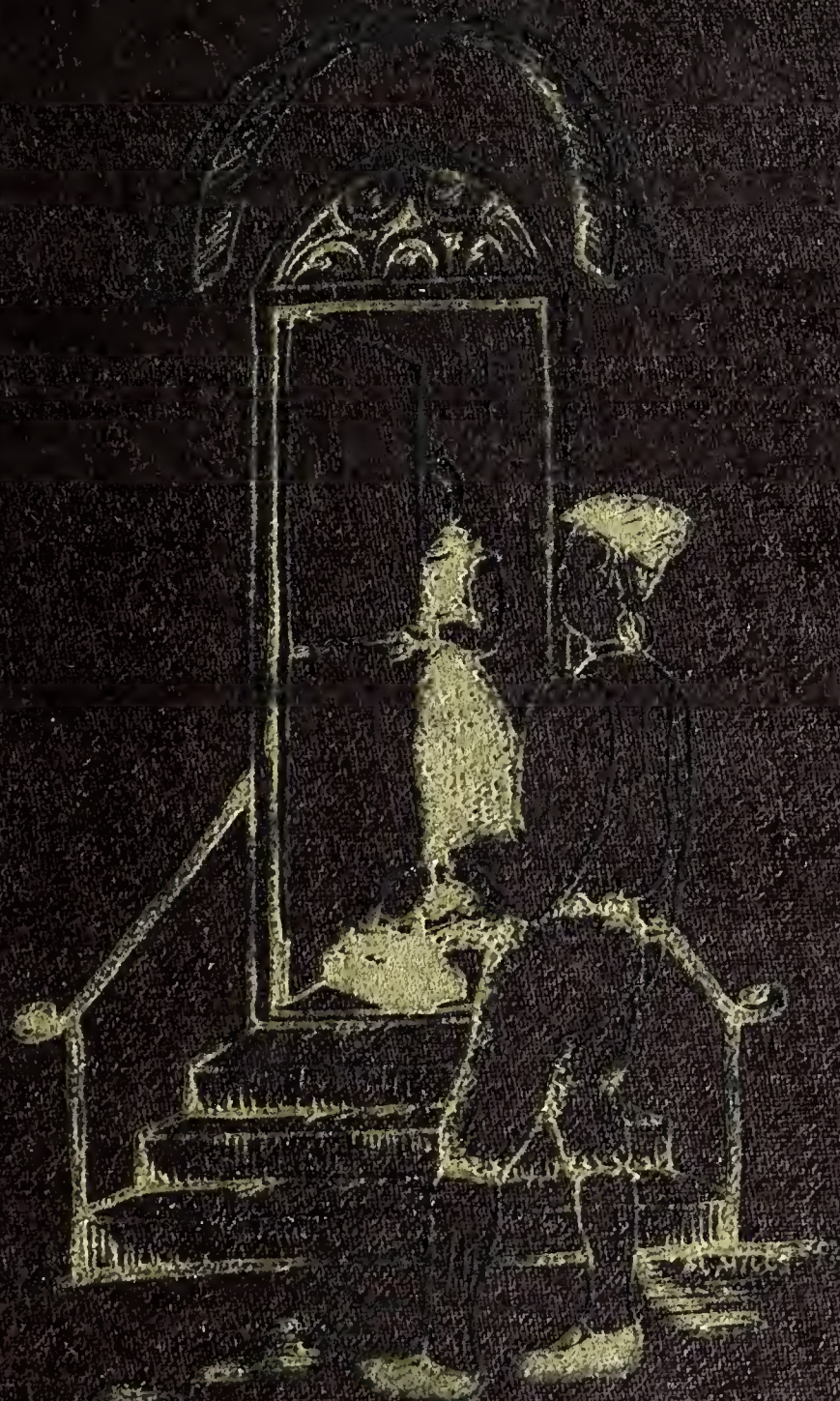


Brethren

with

testimony



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Dorothy R. Nifong

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Brethren

with

Stethoscopes



Dorothy R. Nifong

~~~~~Research Chairman,  
Forsyth-Stokes Medical Auxiliary

Illustrated by Murrienne L. Mills

1965



To Frank





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Research into the history of medicine reveals that the stethoscope was not invented until 1816, by Rene Laennec, a French physician, so therefore, the first four physicians of “Wachovia” (the Moravian owned land in North Carolina) were not “Brethren with Stethoscopes”, and listened to heart sounds by pressing an ear close to the patient’s chest.





Colonial  
and  
Revolutionary  
War  
Era





## Chapter

### 1.

## “THE ANGEL OF MERCY”

1722 - 1759

The first Moravian physician to arrive in North Carolina, Hans Martin Kaberlahn, came in the company of fourteen of the Brethren, all of whom were chosen to begin the settlement of their newly acquired Carolina land, “Wachovia”. On the cold afternoon of November 17, 1753, they stopped wearily before the abandoned cabin of Hans Wagner to unhitch the tired horses from their heavily laden wagon, and take shelter within its cold walls, hoping that it would not snow or rain before they were able to repair the flimsy roof. They held a “love feast” in gratitude for their safe arrival, and named the cabin site “Bethabara”, meaning “house of passage”.

The following day was Sunday and they observed it as a day of worship and rest, but Monday’s dawn found them busily at work repairing the cabin and clearing the land; by the tenth day, they had three acres yielding to their hand-made plow.

An early Bethabara diarist records that the first Brethren in Bethabara were chosen not only because each had a special skill, but because “they were moreover willing and skillful in many things”. The minister worked as carpenter and field hand, the doctor as cook, dishwasher and house-keeper during those first weeks in Bethabara.

News of a physician’s arrival on the frontier spread rapidly and the tall blond Norwegion, with his ready smile and quiet manner, soon found his medical skill much in demand by neighboring settlers within eighty miles of Bathabra, and became known as “the Angel of Mercy” on this North Carolina frontier.

Little is known of the boyhood of Dr. Kaberlahn other than that he was born in Dronethium, Norway, and reared in the Lutheran faith. He began the study of medicine by apprenticeship with an established physician, later embarking on a tour to study and gain experience at various medical centers in Europe. On his tour, he became acquainted with the Moravians, first in Copenhagen, later in Zeist and London. The beautiful simplicity of their faith and their peaceful way of life greatly appealed to the youthful physician, and he joined their membership at the Moravian village of Herrnhaag, Germany.

A gentle but fearless man, endowed with a reckless viking spirit, he readily adopted their missionary zeal and needed no prodding to join a group of young single Brethren engaged in establishing a mill and a farm at Christiansbrum, not far from the village of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It was from here that he and several of his companions were selected to initiate the settlement of the Wachovia property.

Within a few weeks following their arrival in North Carolina, the Brethren were returning to their cabin at the end of the day's labor only to find a cold supper waiting, the room in need of sweeping, and feverish strangers in their beds. It became apparent that if they were to eat, the cooking duties would have to be reassigned, and if they were to sleep, they would have to make provision for the sick who came seeking the services of their physician. Dr. Kaberlahn was relieved of his kitchen responsibilities and assigned only light housekeeping duties, and a building to provide sleeping quarters for their many visitors was speedily erected.

Perhaps Dr. Kaberlahn was not reluctant to relinquish his culinary obligation; the Bethabara diarist records that he painfully scalded his foot while engaged in this duty. Could it have been that in the kitchen the young physician was "morever willing than skillful"?

During the early eighteenth century, the giant, "Scientific Medicine," was only faintly stirring from medieval slumber, and even a well trained physician, such as Kaberlahn, knew nothing of the causative factors of disease. It was generally believed by the practitioners of that time that disease was a result of an imbalance of the body humors, (the bile, the blood, etc.). If the physician diagnosed an illness as being the result of an excessive condition of the humors, he treated the patient by bleeding, purging and sweating; if, on the other hand, the diagnosis was a deficiency of the humors, the patient was given stimulating drugs and dietary support. Needless to say, a patient much preferred his illness to be diagnosed as a deficiency of his body humors. Bleeding was the most widely used therapy, even accident victims were bled, as is evidenced by this excerpt from the diary of Bethabara:

"Brother Peterson was knocked senseless by a fallen tree, receiving an ugly head wound, whom Brother Kaberlahn treated by bleeding, and he soon regained his senses."

A single house call often required a day's journey and Dr. Kaberlahn rode many lonely tiresome miles on horseback, carrying with him his few precious instruments and medicines. At first the forest and field were his pharmacy, furnishing Snakeroot to purify the blood, Holly leaves for a fever reducing tea, and Milkweed, the Indian remedy for pleurisy. With the aid of the Brethren, he burned the native Carolina pines to extract tar water which he prescribed liberally. Later, he designed and planted a neat medicinal herb garden and it became his source of drugs.

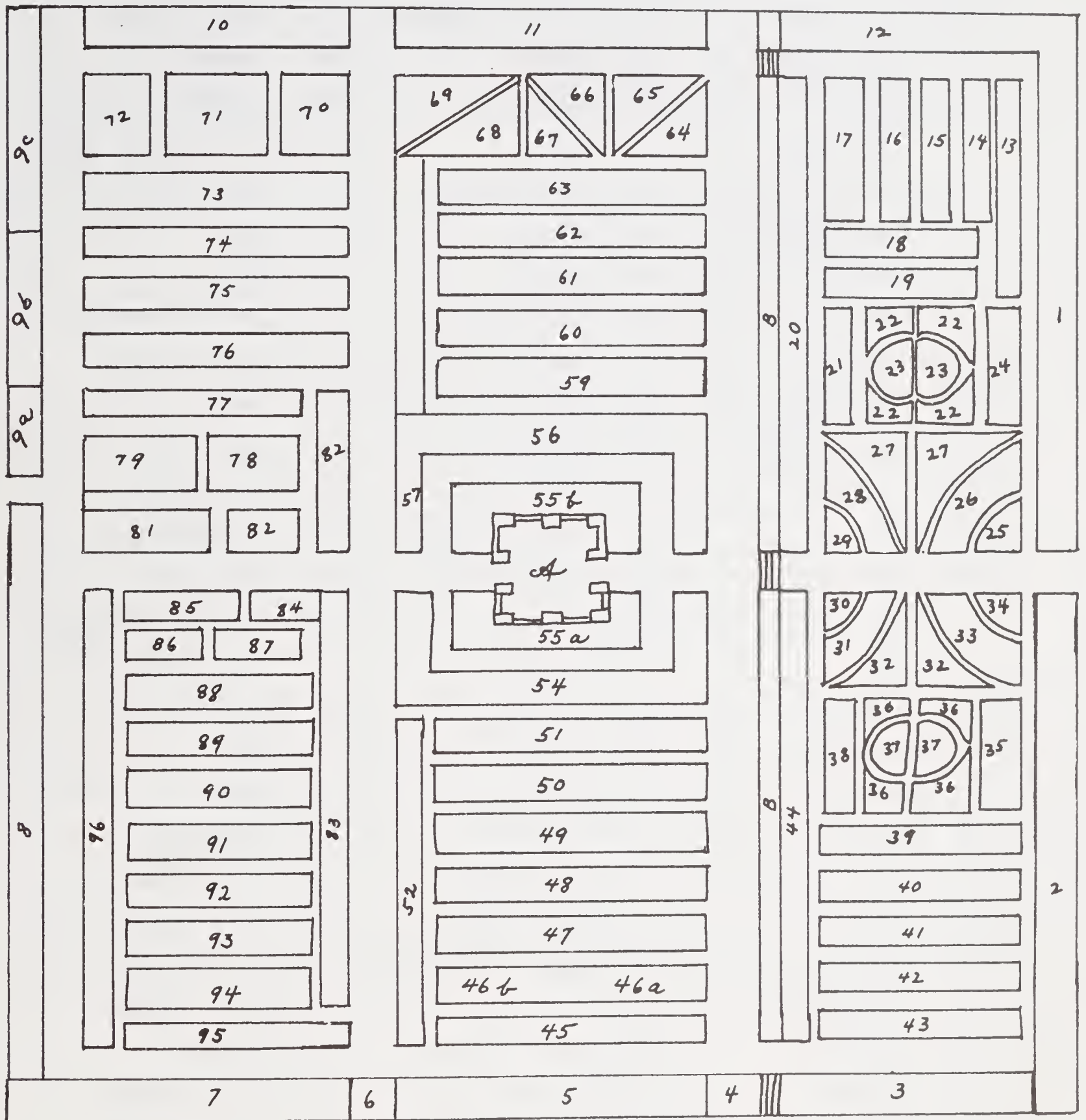
In 1758, Hans Kaberlahn, along with three of the single Brethren, returned to Bethlehem for a year's stay. (He admitted later to his wife that it was a wife-hunting trip.) He and Catharina Antes shared their wedding with seven other couples; three of the Brethren united in marriage at that ceremony on July 29, 1758, were companions of Kaberlahn from Bethabara.

Perhaps something should be said here of the Moravian marriage custom of that day. The single Brethren and the single Sisters had very little social contact, but like all young people, they were aware of each other. A young man seeking a wife presented his request to the Elders,



# HORTUS MEDICUS At Bethobara, Anna MDCCLXI

June 23<sup>rd</sup>



## The Herb Garden



copied by Marianne L. Mills

| Hortus              |                      | Medicus                 |  |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Curly Mint       | 33. A Small Cypress  | 64. White Poppy         |  |
| 2. Curly Mint       | 24. Empty            | 65. Hyssop              |  |
| 3. Anise            | 35. Larkspur         | 66. Larkspur            |  |
| 4. Nasturtium       | 36. Empty            | 67. Flor. Belidor. Min. |  |
| 5. Fennel           | 37. White Poppy      | 68. Chamonite & Hyssop  |  |
| 6. Nasturtium       | 38. Empty            | 69. Sage                |  |
| 7. Caraway          | 39. Empty            | 70. Fennel              |  |
| 8. Caraway          | 40. Red Poppy        | 71. Cardui Benedict     |  |
| 9a. Mugwort         | 41. Seed Red Poppy   | 72. Scurvy Grass        |  |
| 9b. Knot Grass      | 42. Seed Red Poppy   | 73. Salsify             |  |
| 9c. Semen Carvi     | 43. Angelica         | 74. Balm                |  |
| 10. Lavender        | 44. Yarrow           | 75. Wormwood            |  |
| 11. Dill            | 45. Wild Saffron     | 76. Garden Rue          |  |
| 12. Centuary        | 46a. Mary Thistle    | 77. Parthenium          |  |
| 13. Sage            | 46b. Fumitory        | 78. Wandering Poppy     |  |
| 14. Sage            | 47. Lovage           | 79. Chamomile           |  |
| 15. Mugwort         | 48. Lovage           | 80. Scabiosa            |  |
| 16. Mugwort         | 49. Angelica         | 81. Sage                |  |
| 17. Sorrel          | 50. Sorrel           | 82. Sage                |  |
| 18. Sorrel          | 51. Fumitory         | 83. Chamomila           |  |
| 19. Sorrel          | 52. White Lily       | 84. Chamomila           |  |
| 20. Yarrow          | 53. White Lily       | 85. Marsh Mallow        |  |
| 21. Empty           | 54. Red & White Rose | 86. Marsh Mallow        |  |
| 22. "Mundrosen"     | 55a. Citron          | 87. Marsh Mallow        |  |
| 23. Parsley         | 55b. Vicus Hispanio  | 88. Comfrey             |  |
| 24. Larkspur        | 56. Red Rose         | 89. Marsh Mallow        |  |
| 25. Empty           | 57. White Lily       | 90. Sweet Clover        |  |
| 26. A Small Cypress | 58. Coriander        | 91. Black Poppy         |  |
| 27. A Small Cypress | 59. Small Plantain   | 92. Poppy               |  |
| 28. A Small Cypress | 60. Santonicum       | 93. Columbina           |  |
| 29. Sweet Marjoran  | 61. Clary            | 94. Melons              |  |
| 30. Sweet Marjoran  | 62. Fennel           | 95. Cucumeris           |  |
| 31. A Small Cypress | 63. Scurvy Grass &   | 96. Comfrey             |  |
| 32. A Small Cypress | Lavender             | A. Summer House         |  |



sometimes including the name of the Sister he preferred, or leaving the choice of a wife to the Elders' discretion. The approval of the Lord was sought by means of the lot. Negative and affirmative lots were prepared, and if the negative lot was drawn, the matter was dropped; if favorable, the proposal was relayed to the chosen Sister, and she could reject or accept the marriage offer. It was believed that the affirmative was an expression of the will of the Lord, and only rarely were such proposals rejected by the single Sisters.

Dr. Kaberlahn met his bride when called to attend her injuries sustained in a fall from a horse. He requested her hand in marriage through the customary channels, and was accepted by the serious-minded Catharina, who looked upon their meeting as romantic. According to her diary, Moravian marriages were romantic; courtship began after the wedding.

In late April, 1759, Hans and Catharina, and five of the Brethren and their wives, (some of whom were newly-weds also), began the return trip to Bethabara. The budding trees, the balmy Spring breezes, and the joy of romance and companionship, lessened the hardship of travel. They kept a cautious watch for marauding Cherokees, making their way home along the mountains from the battle of Fort Duquesne, but fortunately, they encountered none of them and arrived safely in Bethabara. The village was crowded with refugees from the surrounding farms because of the Indian alarm, but the travelers were greeted by the music of the congregational band and happy shouts of welcome from the Brethren.

During his stay in Bethlehem, the Brethren had built a log house, small but adequate, with a laboratory and living rooms for their returning doctor and his bride. Their days were happy and busy ones that first month in Bethabara, but on July 19th, one of the Sisters died of "Fever". The "Fever" spread rapidly, bringing death and grief to the settlement. Dr. Kaberlahn worked night and day in his effort to save lives and, worn out from his vigil, he too contracted the disease (believed to have been Typhus), and died after a few days' illness. The young physician was laid to rest in "God's Acre" on the steep hill behind the church, mourned by a bride of less than a year and the Brethren and their neighbors along the Yadkin.



BETHABARA CHURCH





*Courtesy of Salem Archives*

*Early Salem*



## Chapter

### 2.

## THE PUBLIC SERVANT

1733 - 1781

Jacob Bonn was a dedicated man, but he lacked the tenderness which had endeared Dr. Kaberlahn to the Brethren and to his patients. Indeed, Dr. Bonn even had a tendency to become condescending at times, a trait which annoyed the Brethren. Proud and impulsive, he was not easy to get along with, but his devotion to Moravian purpose and ideals, and his moral courage instilled in his associates both admiration and respect.

Dr. Bonn was born in Skippach, Pennsylvania, to Mennonite parents, who moved to Bethlehem and became members of the Unity of Brethren. His parents were deeply religious, and indoctrinated him with a feeling of obligation to the Moravian Unity and to the service of that Unity which guided his actions throughout his life.

At an early age he was apprenticed to a tailor, but he longed to study medicine, and at his own request, the Brethren allowed him to dissolve his apprenticeship agreement and begin the study of medicine with a physician in Bethlehem. He arrived in Bethabara on November 11, 1758, to care for the medical needs of the settlement during Kaberlahn's visit to Bethlehem. After Dr. Kaberlahn's death, Dr. Bonn was relieved by August Schubert and he returned to Bethlehem, probably for more study and medical experience, and a wife. At this time not many eligible single Sisters were living in the North Carolina settlement.

In the year 1759, Bethabara had become so crowded with refugees that the Brethren decided to build a second village, three miles away, in the area they called the Black Walnut Bottom. The village was named Bethania, and in the summer of 1759, eight Moravian couples and eight couples who were not members, but wished to live the Moravian way of life, moved into the new town.

There was much traveling between the two villages and, because of the constant danger from Indians, the Brethren rode their big, heavy-bodied horses at full gallop. In the Spring of 1760, more than fifteen of their neighbors were killed by roving bands of Cherokees. The Brethren, in spite of their scruples against the use of fire-arms, were compelled to carry arms and to keep watchmen posted at the villages for their own safety.

In 1761, a site for the main village of Wachovia was selected and reapproved by means of the lot. (The lot was used not only in the marriage custom, but to verify the approval of God in all important decisions made by the Brethren.) The building of the new town, Salem, was begun in June, 1766, and within six years, the village had one hundred and twenty residents. Among the village's first residents was Jacob Bonn, who had



moved with his family into the house prepared especially for him, and thus bears the distinction of being the first physician of Salem.

Bonn divided his time between his medical practice and duties as a sheriff and Justice of the Peace. In his role as a civil servant he was a zealous guardian of the Moravian policy of peace and neutrality, a dangerous and unpopular policy during the Revolutionary War years. Although the Brethren had armed themselves during the Indian uprising, they were able to maintain their objections to conscription and the bearing of arms against the British and the Tories, and contributed to the cause by supplying the material needs of the Continental Army as requested. With the soldiers of both armies present in the area, a great deal of theft occurred, and not even the laundry on the lines was safe from pilferage.

Some of the young men from Friedberg and Bethabara volunteered into the Army, but most of them were not actual members of the Moravian Unity. At one time, a clergyman arrived in Wachovia with the expressed purpose of rallying the Brethren to the cause. Dr. Bonn met the man outside of Salem, and convinced him that the Brethren spoke only German and would be unable to understand him. The discouraged preacher turned away from Salem to peddle his enthusiasm elsewhere.

On occasion, the sick and wounded soldiers were brought into Salem for Dr. Bonn's care. The Salem Memorabilia of 1781 mentions letters from Col. White's Virginia Cavalry, praising and thanking the Moravians for Dr. Bonn's medical assistance.

In 1779, one of the soldiers of a detachment of General Pulaski's army was brought into Salem, sick with small pox. Dr. Bonn, who was acquainted with the inoculation procedure, was desirous of inoculating the village members but was restrained from doing so because of an anonymous letter threatening to burn the village of Salem if such a venture was undertaken. In the following weeks, forty of Salem's residents were felled by this disease; for two it was fatal. Inoculation as practiced by physicians of that era should not be confused with the vaccination procedure developed by Edward Jenner twenty years later, and practiced today. The method used by physicians of Bonn's day involved the securing of matter from the pustules of one afflicted with the disease and injecting it into the body of the well individual, thus producing a mild case of the disease and subsequent immunity. Danger from this method lay in the possibility that the induced mild cases were capable of spreading the disease in severe and sometimes fatal form to those not immune; and occasionally, an individual thus inoculated developed a fatal form of the disease.

Later it was revealed that the threatening letter was a hoax, the prank of a practical joker. In 1781, however, Dr. Bonn inoculated nineteen in the Salem village and twenty in Bethabara with successful results.

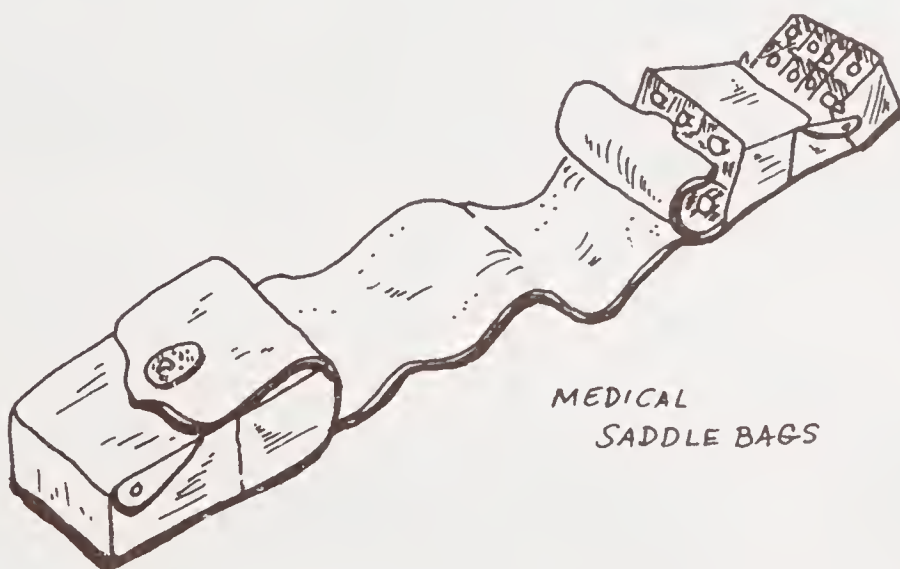
Outstanding among Dr. Bonn's achievements was his organization of medical care. Under his guidance a nursing service was established in the frontier villages. One of the single Brethren was chosen to care for the sick Brethren, and several of the single and married Sisters were elected to serve the sick Sisters and children. Bonn's wife volunteered to be mid-

wife, an office which she was destined to hold as the Doctor's wife, according to the Salem Diary. All nurses received instruction from Dr. Bonn, who held conferences with them concerning their care of the sick at frequent intervals — a remarkable health service, not even available to the residents of cosmopolitan Philadelphia and Boston. Like many professional men, Bonn was a poor business man. For all of his expertness in medical, religious and political matters, he demonstrated a lack of judgment in financial management which appalled the Brethren, who were renown for their thrift and business success.

The following excerpt from the records of the Aufseher Collequim, (Board concerned with the economy of Salem), in 1773 warns:

“Dr. Bonn is running too much in debt, through his building and lack of good management, and his business is suffering through lack of a supply of drugs and other things which are much used. We appreciate his service, and it was proposed to allow him 7 sh. 6 d. per day for expenses when he goes to court; who ever can give him advice as to his affairs and especially how he can bring his apothecary shop into better condition shall give him that assistance.”

Evidently Dr. Bonn did not heed his financial advisors because the advent of his sudden death from cerebral hemorrhage on October 31, 1781, left his family much in debt, as well as the village bereft of physician, and the Brethren, a champion.



MEDICAL  
SADDLE BAGS



## Chapter

### 3.

#### THE RELUCTANT MORAVIAN

August Schubert belongs with those few physicians who stayed only a short time in the Moravian villages in North Carolina, and very little is recorded of his life and work on the frontier.

He arrived in Bethabara in 1759 to assume the duties of Dr. Bonn while he visited in Bethlehem; and he performed his duties skillfully, if not happily, according to the Bethabara diary:

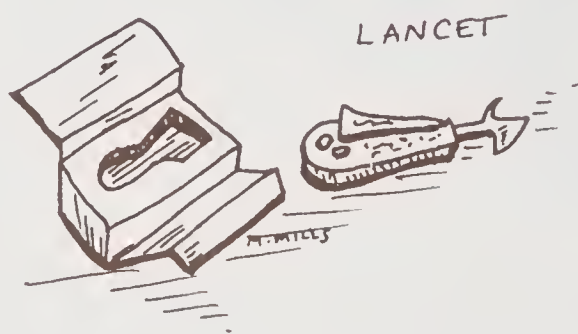
“Our doctor, August Schubert, today performed an operation on an English woman, removing a dangerous growth.”

Just four days later, the diarist writes that the English woman who underwent surgery had recovered sufficiently to be taken home by her husband on a horse-drawn litter.

The possessor of an imperious spirit, Schubert found little of the communal living of the Brethren to his liking. Perhaps he was not a Moravian by birth or heritage, or, possibly he was young and rebellious. Some of the younger generation Moravians rebelled against the marriage custom and became engaged to persons outside the villages, persons of their own choosing. Some, like Dr. Schubert, complained openly of the restrictions imposed upon them by communal living as is evidenced in this notation from the diary:

“Dr. Schubert said that he would leave unless he could have his wife for his own service instead of giving time to the form, and unless they could have what clothing they wished without asking first.”

It was inevitable that the doctor and the Brethren should reach a parting of ways, and in 1765 he returned to Pennsylvania, establishing a practice a few miles from Philadelphia.











# Salem Tavern

## Chapter

### 4.

## THE ENGLISH DOCTOR

1749 - 1788

Salem was without a physician following the death of Jacob Bonn in 1781, until the arrival of Dr. John Lewis, "The English Doctor", in 1784.

A native of the British Isles, John Lewis was born on January 10, 1749, in Long Acre, Carmarthen Township, South Wales. It is not known where or how he obtained his medical knowledge, but it is possible that he was one of the best trained physicians to arrive on the frontier of North Carolina, for medical training in England and Scotland during the late eighteenth century was equal to that of European University medical centers. Schools of anatomy, dissection, and operative surgery, such as the one headed by the famous Dr. William Hunter in London, gained world-wide acclamation, graduating students who belong in "Medicine's Hall of Fame"; Edward Jenner, John Hunter, and James Parkinson.

In 1779, John Lewis accompanied the Fleet of Admiral Parker to the West Indies, serving as Ship's Surgeon. He may have had his first acquaintance with the Brethren on the Island of St. Thomas, where the Moravian missionaries had been at work among the slaves since 1732, or perhaps he had become acquainted with the Moravians of London while he was a student or medical apprentice in that city. At any rate, upon his separation from the Navy, he returned to London and joined the Moravian Congregation there. He answered the request of the Brethren of Salem to become their physician, and set sail for America.

When Dr. Lewis arrived in Bethlehem for a few weeks' rest before beginning the long journey to Salem, he was a bachelor, but not for long; the match-making Brethren married him during this short interval to Sister Catharine Lembke, of nearby Nazareth. The Moravians seemed to consider a wife to be invaluable to their physicians, and a single physician arriving into their villages was promptly urged to choose a wife or allow the Brethren to select a suitable one for him. (After all, they knew the qualities of the available Sisters, and he did not.)

Dr. Lewis and his bride arrived in Salem on June 23, 1784, and moved into the house vacated by the death of Dr. Bonn.

Like the frontier physicians who had gone before him, Dr. Lewis attended all who called on him for medical aid, riding his sturdy horse across the Yadkin River and into the wilderness, his meager instruments and few medicines tied to his saddle. Once, on a return trip from the wilderness across the Yadkin River where he had gone to amputate the leg of a negro slave, his horse bolted and ran, throwing him to the ground and carrying his precious instruments and medicines out of sight. The horse



was caught by a farmer on the same day, but the instruments, which had become unfastened during the flight, were not found until three days of anxious searching had gone by.

In 1786, small pox again threatened Wachovia, and Dr. Lewis spent long sleepless hours attending those stricken in the three Moravian villages and inoculating all who were willing. The days following the epidemic brought new trouble to the Brethren of Salem. The diary of November 22, 1786, reveals their concern:

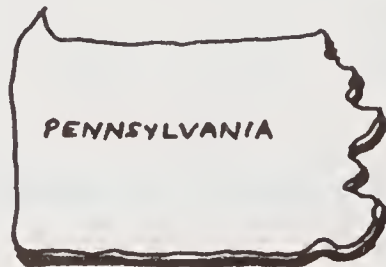
“We heard with distress of the bad conduct of Dr. Lewis, the result of drinking. He shall be spoken to to-morrow, and shall be warned that unless he mends his ways the circumstances will make it impossible for him to remain among us.”

In all probability, Dr. Lewis heeded their warning and attempted to refrain from drinking too much and too often, for the diary does not mention his misbehavior again until February 21, 1787, when patients began to complain that he was in no condition to attend them and that he was resorting to over-charging.

He had in his possession a rifle with which he endangered his life and the lives of others by shooting inside the village limits, repeatedly breaking the laws concerning the use of firearms, and ignoring the demands of the Brethren to surrender his weapon. Soon he became involved in tavern fights, and his behavior left the Brethren with no alternative except to dismiss him from the village and his respected position as Salem's doctor.

On September 8, 1787, Dr. Lewis and his wife set out for Bethania to join a group who were journeying to Pennsylvania. Ill and repentent, the physician looked forward to a new chance granted to him by the Elders of the Moravian village of Litiz, Pennsylvania, who, in need of a doctor, had agreed to accept him on trial.

Dr. Lewis did give up his drinking, but his health was so impaired that he lived only a little more than a year after his departure from Salem, dying unexpectedly while on a visit with his wife in Bethlehem on November 20, 1788.



## Chapter

### 5.

## THE DEDICATED ONE

1765 - 1817

The Brethren gained confidence in the medical skill of Dr. Benjamin Vierling on the very first day of his arrival in Salem, for the Salem diary credits him with saving the life of the critically ill Magdalena Kraus. "Her home-going (death) was expected, but our new doctor brought her safely through the birth of a still-born daughter."

Dr. Vierling, a former Luthern, and a native of Rudelstaat, Silesia, joined the *Unitas Fratrum* in Germany. A graduate of the Medical School of the University of Berlin, he arrived in Salem on February 22, 1790, at the age of twenty-five, to begin twenty-seven years of medical service to Salem. It is interesting to note that on March 14, 1790, less than a month after his arrival, he was married to Anna Elizabeth Bagge, probably at the urging of the Elders, and of course, with the approval of the lot. Theirs was a brief marriage, ended after two years by the death of Anna Elizabeth during an epidemic of "throat disease". (The disease was called "Angina Maligna" by the physicians of that period. The later Moravian Records refer to the epidemic as being Scarlet Fever). The epidemic ravaged Salem, exacting a heavy toll of the youth of the village, and when it spread throughout the Wachovia settlement, the alarmed Brethren called for the assistance of Dr. Cox, a physician of Rockingham County, whom they believed to have great medical skill and knowledge. The two physicians, Vierling and Cox, after consultation, decided to treat the disease with less strong medicine and more fresh air. The Moravians recorded that the epidemic ended shortly after this change in treatment, and credited the goodness of God and the skill of the physicians for its conclusion. Pasteur's germ theory was seventy years in the future; even University graduates, such as Vierling, knew nothing of the cause or transmission of diseases. Although they did not isolate or quarantine their patients, common sense led them to restrict visiting of fever-ridden patients. Unfortunately, they were unaware that the dishes, cups, and clothing of their patients, to say nothing of their own hands, were capable of transmitting the disease.

Left with the care of a six months' old daughter, Dr. Vierling re-married on August 5, 1792, taking as his second wife Martha Elizabeth Miksch, step-granddaughter of Bishop Spangenburg, and daughter of the owner of the Miksch Tobacco Shop. Dr. Vierling became the father of seven more children, a large family even by early nineteenth century standards. He built a large house, in spite of the Elders who thought he was over-extending himself. The physicians of Salem usually encountered opposition in their building plans and were often times restricted by the





*Vierling House*



Elders concerned with the economy of Salem. Like the 20th century physician, he also evoked the criticism of his patients. His large family did influence the Brethren into giving him some special consideration, and they granted permission for him to keep a cow pastured in his back yard. The cow had been given as payment for a medical bill, but Salem residents usually were required to keep their live stock outside the village.

There was no hospital and Dr. Vierling was confronted with the problem of providing care and shelter for patients who came great distances seeking his aid; he was obliged to find Brethren who were willing to board them. The diary of 1805 notes:

“This morning, in the house of the Br. Foltz, there fell asleep a Baptist preacher, John Mond, forty-eight years old. He had been ill for some time with dropsy, and had himself brought forty miles to be under the care of our doctor.”

Several times he requested permission to rent various buildings to house his patients; but, although the Brethren were cognizant of the need, they nevertheless answered his requests with polite refusals.

How his spirit of medical independence must have chafed under their request in 1803 that he not bring patients into town for life or death operations without notifying the Elders. About this same time, the people of Salem were notified that a body could not be placed in the Corpse House without first being examined by Dr. Vierling. There is no record that the always cautious Brethren ever placed a “live” corpse in the building, which might have easily given cause for such a notice, so in all probability, the decision was made for the protection of the people from epidemic diseases; examination of a body would most likely disclose evidence of the cause of death.

In June, 1802, news of scattered smallpox cases in neighboring counties shattered the tranquility of Salem, and the alarmed Brethren approached their physician to inquire about the advisability of using the new Smallpox vaccine. Salem had been free of Smallpox for fifteen years, and a new generation, vulnerable to the disease, had arisen.

The new Cow Pox vaccine, to which the Brethren referred, had been presented to the Medical World in 1798 by Edward Jenner and was a safe and superior successor to the old method of inoculation. The progressive spirit of the Brethren is demonstrated by their knowledge of the newest advance in medical science and their determination to benefit by it. A rider was dispatched to Raleigh to secure the vaccine and, during the months of June and July, some eighty persons were vaccinated successfully in Salem. In 1805, Dr. Vierling vaccinated more than two hundred persons in Wachovia.

He proved himself to be an outstanding surgeon; many instances of his surgical prowess are recorded by the Salem diarist. On February 2, 1802, he removed a growth weighing two and one-half pounds from the left side of Mr. John Johnson of Randolph County. Mr. Johnson, a sixty year old school teacher, recovered from the operation.

A Presbyterian minister from Guilford County brought his daughter to Dr. Vierling seeking aid for her "weakness of mind". The doctor trepanned (perforated and removed a piece of bone from) the skull, and eye witnesses declared that the girl's mind showed marked improvement.

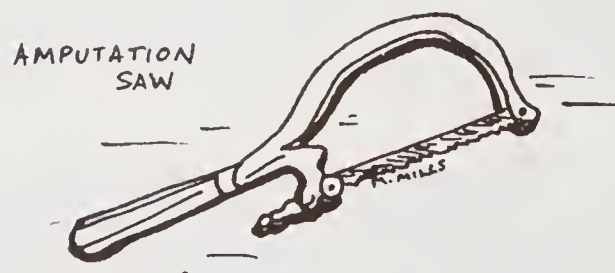
He performed several amputations, and a number of times removed cancerous lesions from patients with surprising success. His surgical triumphs are a tribute to his skill, for surgery during his life time was a hazardous procedure. There were no anesthetics, no blood transfusions, no supportive drugs, and no antibiotics. The patient fortunate enough to survive the pain and shock of surgery often succumbed to infection later. Statistics kept by an English surgeon, (Lister), during the years 1864 - 1866, revealed that forty-five per cent of the amputations performed during those years proved fatal. Lister's principle of Antisepsis in surgery was not introduced to the field of surgery until 50 years after Dr. Vierling's death and sparked the beginning of safe modern surgery.

Dr. Vierling was modern in his ideas, recognizing the need of the physically handicapped to lead a useful life. One of the Brethren whose blindness had become a hypochondrical problem was persuaded by Dr. Vierling to assist others in the task of sawing wood, restoring his self-pride, providing him with gainful employment, and most of all, bringing peace to his family once more.

Concerned with the dietary habits of the villagers, Dr. Vierling warned them of eating too much salt pork, and was instrumental in the establishment of a market where fresh meat would be available.

Although he served on the Aufseher Collegium and on the Music Committee, most of his time was devoted to his medical practice. Unlike Dr. Bonn, he declined to serve as a Justice of the Peace when he was appointed by the General Assembly, (considered an honor), because he believed it would interfere with his obligation to his patients. He could not be persuaded to attend a convention of physicians to be held in Raleigh because his conscience would not permit him to leave his patients for the time such a meeting would require.

On November 5, 1817, at the age of fifty-two, life came suddenly to an end for Dr. Vierling, and the Brethren had to rely solely on Frederick Schuman, a temperamental German physician who had moved into Salem in 1815 from Bethania.





# Horse and Buggy Days





# Tannenburg Organ



## Chapter

### 6.

#### “THAT PESTIFEROUS DOCTOR”

1777 - 1862

Frederick Heinrick Schuman disturbed the peaceful existence of the Brethren for almost all of the fifty-four years he lived among them as their physician. Nature had endowed this fiery German physician with a volatile temperament, preventing him from living amicably with the Brethren, and sowing discord in his wake. Just two years after his arrival in Bethania, he was engaged in a controversy with one of the most respected of the Brethren, and in 1810, the Bethania diary discloses:

“Two parties have arisen in Bethania, one following Brother Schuman and the other following Jacob Loesch.”

The Elders in Salem received letters of complaint from several of the Brethren in Bethania concerning the Doctor's behavior. One told of the brutal beating he had inflicted upon a young slave boy who was serving him in payment for his master's medical debt; another complained of his temper, and one even hinted that he was too fond of the ladies. The Brethren were shocked and dismayed. Physicians were difficult to replace, especially well qualified ones such as Schuman, who had earned a medical degree from the University of Jena. How they must have worried and prayed over their dilemma; but with typical missionary and evangelistic spirit, they hoped to temper the character of their new doctor and make him a valuable asset to their settlements. It was a monumental undertaking, and some of them never lived to see “that Pestiferous Doctor” change, or even mellow. He lived a long life and appears not to have softened any until the very last decade of it. Like Paul, the Elders of Salem learned to live with their “thorn in the flesh”, Brother Frederick Schuman.

By 1814, feeling against the physician was running high in Bethania, and the Brethren agreed to his request to practice medicine in Salem. Quarrelsome as always, Dr. Schuman differed with the Aufscher Collegium over where he was to live in Salem. After many letters and meetings, he finally accepted their offer of a plantation south of Salem, across the Wach, (Salem Creek), but close enough that he could assist Dr. Vierling in caring for the medical needs of Salem.

This problem settled to his satisfaction, Dr. Schuman interjected another for their consideration. He believed that, since Dr. Vierling was already established and quite popular, he would need additional employment to support his family, and wanted to be assured of a yearly income of at least one hundred and fifty dollars. The Collegium met and decided to guarantee him the desired amount by assigning him the care of the Boarding school students, the faculty, the ministers, and their families.

If the Brethren uttered a sigh of relief, it was only a brief respite for them, for as he made plans to move, they were notified that he intended to bring along with his family a young slave woman and her two children. There was immediate opposition to this plan since that would increase by three the meager slave population of Salem. Dr. Schuman was given a choice of either leaving the slave's two children in Bethania, or securing another negress to care for his ailing wife and young son. It was decided that the children would remain in Bethania. Once he was established on his plantation, he badgered the Brethren into allowing him to acquire more slaves, necessary, he stated, to the running of his plantation. It is interesting to note that in later years, he freed his slaves and payed their passage to Libera.

It is not known which of the Brethren first alluded to Dr. Schuman as that "Pestiferous Doctor"; it might easily have been a member of the Aufseher Collegium, weary of the Schuman arguments and demands. At any rate, he well deserved that title according to his contemporaries.

Although he was difficult to get along with, and impossible when aroused to anger, he was a very capable physician, and his patients had great confidence in his ability to treat them. After the death of Dr. Vierling in 1818, however, twenty of the Brethren signed a petition requesting the Collegium to secure an "English-speaking" physician for Salem. The petition infuriated Schuman and he wrote a letter of condemnation to all twenty signers. He accused the petitioners of being two-faced, crediting them also for his lack of popularity:

"In my opinion, to keep his popularity a physician needs continuous luck which you cannot possibly extort from the Almighty Lord over death and life, health and illness, and also a flexibility of the character of which I always thought as not coexisting with uprightness."

He threatened to leave Salem if, and when, another physician responded to their call and moved into Salem.

The Brethren apparently were not too concerned with his raving and ranting, and proceeded to make arrangements for another physician to come. With the assistance of Dr. Louis de Schweintz of Bethlehem, who was in Europe at that time, they were successful in securing Dr. Christian Davin Kuhn. Dr. Schuman remained as congregational doctor, evidently cooling off in the interim.

When a "fever" broke out among the missionaries and their Cherokee charges in North Georgia, Dr. Schuman insisted on accompanying the rider whom they had sent for medicines, back to the mission and treating them personally.

An athletic man, he loved horses and was a daring rider. He kept a strong able team which he often allowed the Brethren to use for hauling their heavy wagons on long trips.

A very talented musician, he was an organist and a singer, once conducting a performance of "The Creation" and singing the part of Uriel, also. Unfortunately, other musicians found him to be jealous of his talent, and had to avoid arousing his resentment.



At a meeting of the Aeltesten Conferenz in 1824, (Elders chosen to guide the spiritual affairs of the Brethren), the election of Dr. Schuman by the congregational council to represent them as a delegate to the coming Synod became a topic of controversy. A member brought to the Board's attention the regulation requiring that a delegate to Synod be a communicant member of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church). The amazed Brethren realized that none of them had seen the Doctor present at communion, and when approached about the matter, Dr. Schuman readily admitted that he did not attend communion, and could not, because he disagreed in part with the Augsburg Confession. In compliance with the regulations, he waived his election as delegate rather than his objections to the Augsburg Confession.

In August of the same year, the records note the dismissal of Dr. Schuman from the Salem Congregation because he refused to answer questions concerning "some disorder in his housekeeping". Angered and offended when questioned by the Brethren, he informed them that his sense of honor forbade him to answer such rumors. The Brethren had no choice but to dismiss him from their fellowship, and the minutes of the Aufseher Collegium on August 8, 1824, verify that such was their decision:

"As Dr. Schuman is not a member of the congregation he cannot hold the position of congregational doctor. Therefore, the \$50.00 granted to him annually for serving the ministers comes to an end."

However, he was allowed to live on his plantation and practice medicine in Wachovia, although he was no longer a member of the Salem congregation.

In 1836, twelve years after his dismissal, he remarried, taking as his wife the daughter of a Moravian minister, Theodora Shulz. The marriage took place in the presence of the spiritual leaders of Salem, indicating that Dr. Schuman was regaining their good graces, and with his father-in-law to intermeditate for him, it is not surprising to find that on March 2, 1837, he was re-admitted to the congregation.

His exile from the congregation had not mellowed his disposition, nor was he especially gratified by his re-acceptance into their fellowship, and the Brethren soon realized the "Pestiferous Doctor" was still worthy of his name. He wanted the Brethren to buy his plantation and allow him to buy a house in the village. After long discussion and much argument, the Collegium and Dr. Schuman finally came to an agreement on a price for the plantation and a home for him in Salem.

Apparently, he lived peacefully with the Brethren after his move into Salem, even consenting to the coming of a third physician in 1840, Dr. Augustus Theophilus Zevely. He is mentioned as being active in the founding and maintaining of Salem's first bank. As a matter of fact, the diarists of Salem, after 1850, disclose no difficulties between the Collegium and Dr. Schuman.

It is only natural that his many eccentricities have made him legendary, and stories about him have been passed from generation to generation.

One of the best known episodes of his life concerns his treatment of

a young man who sought his help because his jaws locked. Dr. Schuman very courteously invited the boy to be seated: however, before his bending form reached the chair, the doctor quickly removed the chair, and the boy fell to the floor. The sudden jolt to his body unlocked his jaws — an effective, but startling treatment.





## Chapter

### 7.

## THE LAST GERMAN DOCTOR

1793 - 1859

The physician who came in response to the petitioners of Salem for an English-speaking doctor, was a German. He was nevertheless readily accepted, giving credence to Dr. Schuman's suspicion that the Brethren really wanted only to bring another physician into Salem so that they would no longer be wholly dependent on him for their medical needs.

Christian David Kuhl, dignified and dedicated, assumed his position as one of Salem's physicians with such tact and diplomacy he disarmed even the hostile Schuman.

Born in Niesky, Saxony, to parents who were members of a roving missionary band (Moravians), he was a serious, studious young man who developed a deeply religious character and lived his life according to the precepts of his pious parents.

His early education took place in the Boy's School and Seminary at Niesky, and when he chose a career in medicine, he began his study with an established physician of the village. Most medical schools of the Nineteenth Century required a student to have had a three year apprenticeship in medicine as a prerequisite for acceptance into the school. The medical school program consisted of lectures and laboratory experience, but for the most part, the second year was merely a repetition of the first. Students had meager clinical experience since most schools were not at this time affiliated with hospitals.

The aspiring young physician, Christian Kuhl, entered the medical school of the University of Jena, and graduated in 1815 with a degree in medicine. His decision to "hang out his shingle" in Prussia led to his enrollment at the University of Berlin and the securing of a medical degree from that institution also. (Prussian law required a doctor to obtain a degree from the University of Berlin before granting him permission to practice.) Dr. Kuhl, however, was not destined to be a Prussian practitioner, and the invitation to become Salem's physician, extended to him personally by Dr. Louis Schweinitz, received his enthusiastic acceptance.

Arriving in Salem on December 15, 1818, he was given lodging in the Brother's House where he lived as a bachelor for seven months, maintaining his single status longer than any of the previous physicians. When he married, he took as his bride the seventeen year old Magdalena Landman. (There was a scarcity of houses in Salem, and probably some delay in his marriage could be attributed to this, for the minutes of the Aufseher Collegium in April, 1819, make note of Dr. Kuhl's urgent requests for a house.)

He and Magdalena first set up housekeeping in a rented dwelling,





*Dr. Christian David Kuhlmann*



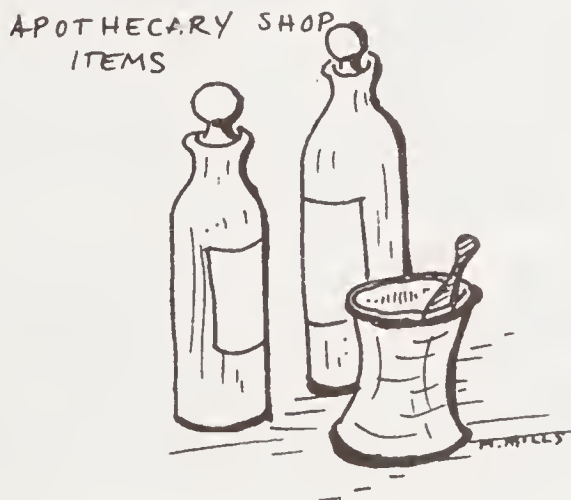
but in 1831 they moved into their own newly built brick home on the corner of Main and Walnut Streets, which, in addition to housing his family, had within its walls an apothecary shop and an examining room (laboratory).

An avid reader and lover of literature, he endowed his children with names of literary characters, Theodore Felix, Miranda Rosalia, Flordora Alexis, Leander William, and Orestes Aneas. The sixth child was named Francis Edward; perhaps Mrs. Kuhn, tired of struggling with the illustrious names of her first five off-spring, insisted on naming the last child herself.

A man of personal integrity, he was as much respected for his Christian character as he was for his medical skill. He was honored by the Brethren in their selection of him to hold positions of responsibility in the church and the community. Although he was a stern father, he had a compassion for the foibles of youth, and served on a committee in Salem organized to foster the “upbuilding of the Young Men of Salem”.

A sudden “Stroke” in 1853 left him with a partial paralysis, but he continued to practice medicine on a limited scale until his death in 1859. The following excerpt from his memoir in the Moravian Archives reveals the high esteem in which he was held by his friends and patients:

“It may without hesitation be said that during his long residence in the midst of this community, his strict integrity and irreproachable life gained for him universal respect and esteem. To the poor he was a kind and generous benefactor, and in very many families his memory will be cherished as a faithful and tried friend — no less than a skillful and attentive physician.”



## Chapter

### 8.

## CHANGES IN SALEM

1849 - 1900

The Moravian land, "Wachovia", became a part of the new county of Forsyth by an act of the legislature in 1849, and the village of Salem located in the middle of the new county was viewed by many as the ideal location for the County Seat. The conservatives of the Brethren were greatly alarmed, they recalled that when Richmond Courthouse was located at the nearby village of Donnaha, it was said that if one wanted to go to hell, he need go no further than there. Whipping was still a major form of punishment, and the spectacle of a whipping post in Salem was extremely distasteful to them. The more progressive of the Brethren, the business man in particular, considered carefully the alternative of having a county seat elsewhere which would inevitably attract the brisk trade away from Salem. Their logic prevailed, and although the courthouse was not built in Salem, it was in close proximity to the village, on Moravian land sold for that purpose. A new town came into being, its streets a continuation of Salem's streets, and in later years, they would combine to become the twin-city of Winston-Salem (1913).

By 1854, German was no longer the popular language of Salem, and for practical reasons, the diaries were now recorded in English. The lease system, the mainstay of their communal system of living, was abandoned in 1856.

The young people became more and more attracted by the freedom and independent living of their contemporaries outside the Moravian villages. They no longer married by permission of the Elders or the lot, and the lot system became obsolete.

They were drawn to the cause of the Confederacy and shouldered arms along with their non-Moravian companions, marching out of Salem to the stirring music of the Salem Band.

Medical knowledge was slowly maturing and became a fully grown science during the life span of the first Dr. Shaffner, but not in time to assist him in the saving of lives on battlefields in 1862. Of the 246,712 wounded in the war, 31,978 died of their wounds, but more soldiers died of disease (186,216) than were killed in action (44,238).





*Years  
of the  
Confederacy*



# Boy's School

SADDLER'S  
SIGN





## Chapter

### 9.

#### NATIVE SON

1816 - 1872

Augustus Zevely was the first North Carolina born Moravian to become a physician of Salem. His father, Vanneman Zevely, lived just outside of the village and was a cabinet maker until his duties as lay preacher along the frontier became so demanding that he was compelled to relinquish his work in favor of his missionary endeavors.

Young Augustus attended the Boy's School in Salem, and in 1832, his father was given permission to send him to a Brother Kelly in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, where he was to learn the trade of a Saddler. On his return in 1836, he was allowed to open a small saddle shop in Salem, with the stipulation that he was to operate the shop alone; that is, he could not hire help. High spirited and impetuous, he hired help just as soon as he felt the need for someone, much to the disapproval of the Brethren. Possessor of youthful exuberance, his name appears with those of several young men who were to be admonished for boisterous behavior in the tavern and serenading in the square at the late hour of eleven.

During the year 1836, the young saddler was plagued with an illness, which might well have been connected in some way with his trade, because in October he left the saddle shop in care of another saddler and set forth on a journey to regain his health. The next mentioning of him in the Diary of Salem is the announcement on October 6, 1840, of the marriage of "Augustus Zevely, M.D., to the Single Sister Lucinda Pauline Blum who has been teacher in the school here."

Whether or not he served an apprenticeship in medicine is not known; he did, however, attend the Jefferson Medical College for two years, receiving his M.D. in 1840. In all probability, he spent at least one of the years between 1836 and 1838 as a physician apprentice, perhaps with Dr. Kuhlman or with a physician in Bethlehem. The diary states that he returned to Salem in 1840 and began the practice of his profession with the approval of the physicians, Schuman and Kuhlman.

As was characteristic of most of Salem's physicians, Dr. Zevely was active in church and civic affairs. He served as physician to Salem Academy, was twice elected to the School Board and Aufseher Collegium, and in 1864 was chosen to be a delegate to the Moravian Provincial Synod.

He was devoted to his wife and their five children and would certainly be referred to today as a "family man". His wife preceded him in death by two years, and one of his contemporaries noted that her death had dealt him a blow from which he never recovered. He simply seemed unable to adjust to life without his Lucinda, and his own health began to fail. In less than a year, he was unable to continue the practice of medicine, and on May 24, 1872, he died in Salem at the age of fifty-six.





*Dr. Theodore Felix Kuhlmann*



## Chapter

### 10.

## THE QUIET ONE

1822 - 1877

Theodore Felix Kuhn, son of Dr. Christian David Kuhn, was a scholarly, quiet man, who chose to adopt his father's profession.

Born in Salem, he attended the Boy's School and later, Nazareth Hall in Pennsylvania. At the very young age of seventeen, in 1839, he became a teachers in the Boy's School, indicating that he was a responsible and capable youth, for the Brethren were fastidious in their selection of schoolmasters.

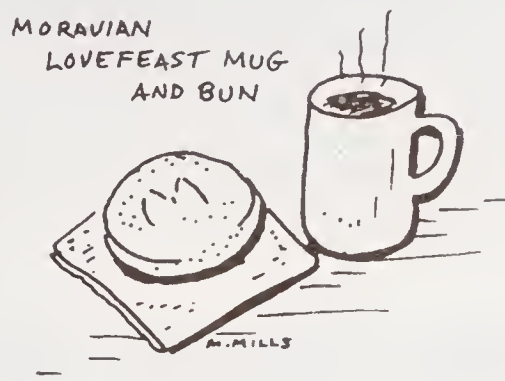
In 1841, he was permitted to relinquish his obligations as schoolmaster, and moved to Philadelphia for the purpose of preparing for the medical profession. The next mentioning of him in the diary of Salem announces the marriage of Dr. Theodore Felix Kuhn to Susanna Elizabeth Rights on November 29, 1849.

It must be assumed that sometime between 1841 and 1849 he attended medical school and secured an apprenticeship. During those years, the only two medical schools in Philadelphia were "The University of Pennsylvania (estab. 1768) and the Jefferson Medical College (1825)." Neither school has a record of his attendance.

Very little is known of his personal life. He and Mrs. Kuhn were childless, but raised an adopted daughter.

It has been recorded that he had "an excellent singing voice" and was a willing and talented participant in the musical programs of the village.

According to his euologist, he had a cheerful, pleasant manner, "which brought sunlight into the sick-room," and his death was mourned especially by his patients who considered him to be more than their physician, a needed friend.





*Dr. John Francis Shaffner*



## Chapter

### 11.

## THE ARMY SURGEON

1838 - 1908

In the "War Between the States", Moravians shouldered arms for the first time since the Indian Uprising, when in spite of their scruples, they had been compelled to carry arms for their own protection. Moravian young men rallied to the confederate cause, and Salem Square became the site of many sad farewells.

Among the first of the Brethren to volunteer was John Francis Shaffner, proud new graduate of the Jefferson Medical College. Enlisting as a private, he soon became the Assistant Surgeon of the Seventh, the Twenty-first, and the Thirty-third North Carolina Regiments. In 1862, he was promoted to Surgeon and served in the field as a Brigade Surgeon until the surrender of General Lee's Army at Appomatox Court House.

A typical Moravian, he had an inborn respect for records and kept a diary of his experiences throughout the war years. His courage and dignity are woven into the words he wrote by candlelight in his tent long ago. He was quick to resent injustice, even risking court-martial for questioning the orders of a Colonel whom he considered to be tyrannical and unreasonable. The Colonel, who suspected a certain Captain of being a malinger, ordered Surgeon Shaffner to examine him three times each day and report in writing the findings of each examination to his tent. Dr. Shaffner was unsure as to the nature of the Captain's illness, for like most hypochondriacs, he had some manifestation of physical illness:

" . . . and find he is still complaining with rheumatism, dyspeisia and diarrhea there are symptoms of the latter, the former must be aggravated to be distinguished."

The Captain was persistent in his protest that he was too ill to be on duty, and each day that he did not report, the Colonel required Surgeon Shaffner to carry out this examination order. Refusal by Dr. Shaffner to comply, led to charges of insubordination from the Colonel, but the intervention of fellow-officers evoked a compromise agreement, and it was decided that the Captain would report to the tent of Dr. Shaffner for his daily examination when incapacitated, and only one report would be made.

Tetanus, one of the leading killers of the wounded during the war, is classically described by Dr. Schaffner, and the following commentary by him concerning the treatment of Tetanus at that time reveals the very limited knowledge of the causes of disease during even the late nineteenth century.

"Treatment is still unsatisfactory. Some physicians conceive it a disease connected with debility, urgently rec-

commend tonics and stimulants, others urge venesection in early stages . . . in military practice, former preferable, debility succeeding gun shot wounds.”

Throughout his diary, there is much written of Caroline Fries, obviously the Salem miss of his choice, and they were married shortly after his return to Salem and civilian life.

Dr. Shaffner was a capable business man as well as a physician. He was active in the medical, civic, and business affairs of the community and the state. He died in 1908, leaving the following distinguished record:

Board of Medical Examiners of North Carolina —  
1868 - 1872.

President of the Medical Society of the State of North  
Carolina — 1880.

Delegate to the American Medical Association — 1872.

Orator of the North Carolina Medical Society — 1877.

Commissioner of Salem.

Mayor of Salem.

First President of Salem Water Supply Company.

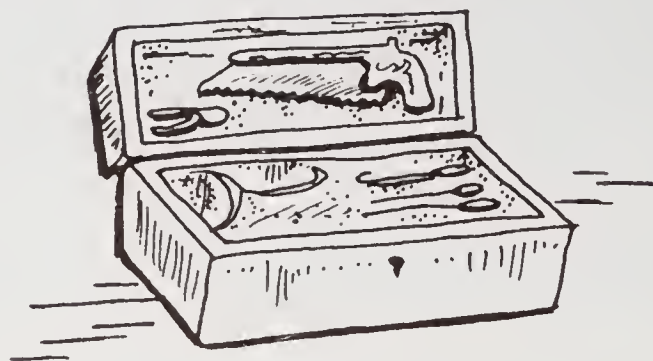
Director of the North West North Carolina Railroad.

Vice-President of the Winston-Salem Building and Loan  
Association.

Member of the Board of Salem Boy's School.

Member of the Financial Board of the Southern Province  
of the Moravian Church.

BOX OF MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS







*Dr. Nathaniel Shober Siewers*

## Chapter

### 12.

## THE BANDSMAN

1845 - 1901

Nathaniel Shober Siewers, born in Salem, was the third native son to return home and practice medicine among his friends and kinfolk.

He acquired his early education at the Boy's School in Salem and Nazareth, Pennsylvania. In 1863, at eighteen years of age, he interrupted his studies to volunteer his services to the Army of the Confederacy, joining the Twenty-first Regiment, North Carolina Troops, under the command of Colonel W. W. Kirkland and becoming a member of the regimental band.

For the music loving Moravians, the church band was an integral part of their religious and civil life. Now in the perilous war years, many a "Johnny Reb" bade his family farewell in Salem Square as the Salem Band played, and the sounds of their spirited music stirred young hearts and old to courage and patriotism as they marched out of Salem.

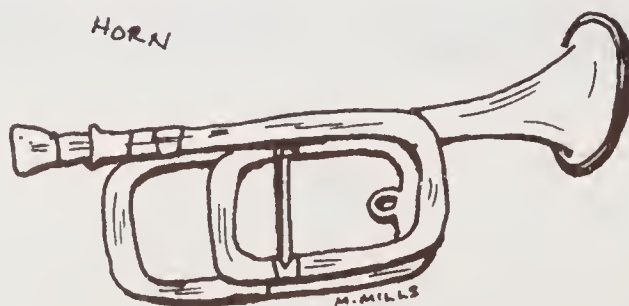
Dr. Siewers liked to recall in his later years that on the hour in which he returned home from the war, the bell of Home Church was ringing the call to Maundy (Thursday) night service of Passion Week, and he was able to take his place among the band members on Easter morning for the sunrise service.

He began his preparation for a medical career of "reading" medicine with Dr. Christian David Kuhl, and in 1865, he entered the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. After graduation in 1867, he studied for two years at the Medical Schools of the Universities of Berlin, Prague and Vienna, returning to Salem in 1869. He remained a bachelor for the first six years of his practice, marrying Eleanor de Schweinitz on October 15, 1875. They became the parents of seven children.

An excellent surgeon, it is believed that Dr. Siewers performed the first appendectomy in the Winston-Salem area. He recognized medical science in his day as being in its infancy, and predicted that in some future time, man would be able to have diseased organs of his body replaced — a theory that has almost become a reality today, with the "Heart and Lung Machine", the "Artificial Kidney", and the Kidney Transplant operation.

A noble man of great dignity, he was consecrated to his Christian beliefs and his Moravian heritage, serving on the Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees of his church (Home Moravian). In 1890, he was the first layman to be elected an Elder of the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church.

He died on January 12, 1901, following a lengthy illness.





## Chapter

### 13.

## GENTLEMAN-FARMER AND PHYSICIAN

1845 - 1917

Henry Theodore Bahnson, another veteran of the Civil War, enlisted in the army of the Confederacy in 1862, and like Dr. Shaffner, served until the surrender at Appomatox. At first, he was a private in Company G, Second North Carolina Battalion of Infantry. During the final struggle in Virginia he was appointed a Captain of the Sharpshooters, but it was impossible to deliver the commission to him, and in later years, he liked to remark that he was the only surviving private of the War.

He was first captured at Gettysburg and imprisoned in the Baltimore City Jail and at Point Lookout, Maryland, for a period of six months, until his exchange. His description of the days he spent as a prisoner is a revelation of the warmth and humor which marked his character throughout the horrors of his years as a soldier, and in his very worthwhile life as a citizen and a physician. The Baltimore jail was woefully inadequate, and the hundreds of prisoners were so crowded that three or four slept in each small cell, many having to lie on the balconies and floors of the building. Sleeping on the cold slab floor was a miserable effort, and to make matters worse, a party of card players sat up each night to pursue their game, in spite of the grumblings and complaints of the others. One night, several men slipped to the balcony above the rowdy players and emptied the water from an immense bucket, (about 10 gallons), down onto the heads of the unsuspecting players. The water, coming from the high balcony, had a tremendous force and scattered the card players like ten pins. One of them rolled near young Private Bahnson and, rubbing his bruises, complained vehemently; Private Bahnson, badly in need of sleep, was far from sympathetic, responding instead with a wry grin, "you deserved it". To the wet bedraggled card player, this was the last straw and the two quickly engaged in a fight. A guard separated them almost immediately and they were marched to a dark cell under the basement of the other wing of the prison. The boys became reconciled on the way, and although they received only bread and water in the morning, they had an old coarse mattress to sleep on and "put in the only night's sleep we had in our four weeks in jail", (Dr. Bahnson). They were even reluctant to relinquish their special cell to the famous Southern woman spy, Belle Boyd, that afternoon.

After his exchange, he reached home on January 14, 1864, and when he returned to the ranks, he was transferred to Company B, First North Carolina Battalion of Sharpshooters, gaining for himself as member of this outfit, the reputation of being a fearless fighter. Of combat, he has said:





*Dr. Henry Theodore Bahnson*



“The killing and wounding of my comrades thoroughly aroused the brutal part of my nature. The desire for revenge made my aim deliberate. Of course, others were firing with me, and I cannot say with certainty that I killed anyone. I thank God feverently for this possible doubt.”

He was with the Army of General Lee until the day of surrender, but before the war ended, he was captured once more. After his release, he set forth on foot for home, forced to beg for food along the way. When he arrived at his father's door, weary and footsore, emaciated and filthy, he was at first not recognized; indeed, he had been mourned for dead. A burying detail had given his company the description of a young man who so resembled him, that they had marked a grave with a board bearing his name.

His soldiering days behind him, Theodore Henry Bahnson resumed the educational preparation for a career in medicine, which the war had interrupted. His father, the Rev. George Frederic Bahnson, was the Southern Bishop of the Moravian Church, and had guided the Brethren wisely and courageously through the trying war years. Prior to his place of leadership in Salem, he had been pastor of the Moravian Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and it was there that Dr. Bahnson was born on March 4, 1845. The family moved to Salem when he was four years of age, and as can be expected, his early education took place in the Salem Boy's School. Later, he transferred to Nazareth Hall in Pennsylvania and eventually to the Moravian College at Bethlehem. In 1865, still gaunt from his war experiences, he entered the Medical College of the University of Pennsylvania, emerging in 1867 with a medical degree and a special diploma in Practical and Surgical Anatomy which he had earned under the instruction of the eminent Philadelphia surgeon, Dr. Hays Agnew. He embarked for Europe shortly after his graduation for two years of study at three of the great medical centers of Europe, the Universities of Berlin, Prague, and Utrecht.

In 1869 he returned to Salem and began forty years of medical and surgical practice. His first marriage, to Adelaide de Schweinitz, was ended by her death less than a year after their marriage. Three years later he married Emma C. Fries.

Dr. Bahnson became as well known to the citizens of the thriving new town of Winston as he was to the Brethren of Salem. He was active in the civic affairs of both communities; the movement for a public hospital was begun in his home on June 27, 1887, by a group of thirty-one women.

Like most of the “Brethren with Stethoscopes”, he served his church unselfishly and, at the time of his death, was a member of the Moravian College and Seminary Board of Trustees and had been the attending physician for Salem College and Academy for thirty years.

Professionally, he was the recipient of many honors, serving as President of the Association of Surgeons of the Southern Railway, The North

Carolina Medical Society, and the State Board of Health; he was once Secretary of the State Board of Medical Examiners.

He loved nature and "growing things" and he had a beautiful restful garden at his home in Salem. On his farm, he raised the first registered Guernsey cattle in the State of North Carolina.

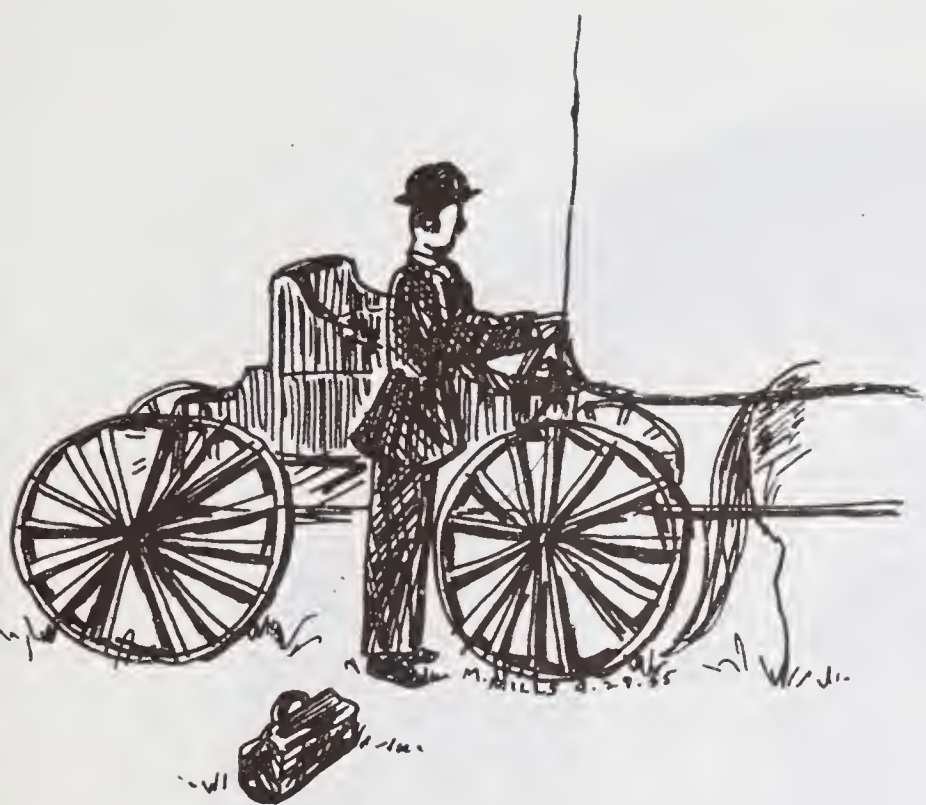
Gentleman-farmer, physician and church-man, Dr. Bahnson lived by his religious convictions. His life ebbed away on January 16, 1917, after a long and painful illness. A writer of the Winston-Salem Journal at the time of his death describes him:

"Dr. Bahnson was one of those rare spirits that are occasionally sent into the world to show the dignity to which mankind can attain by hearing only the call of that which is noble and uplifting."

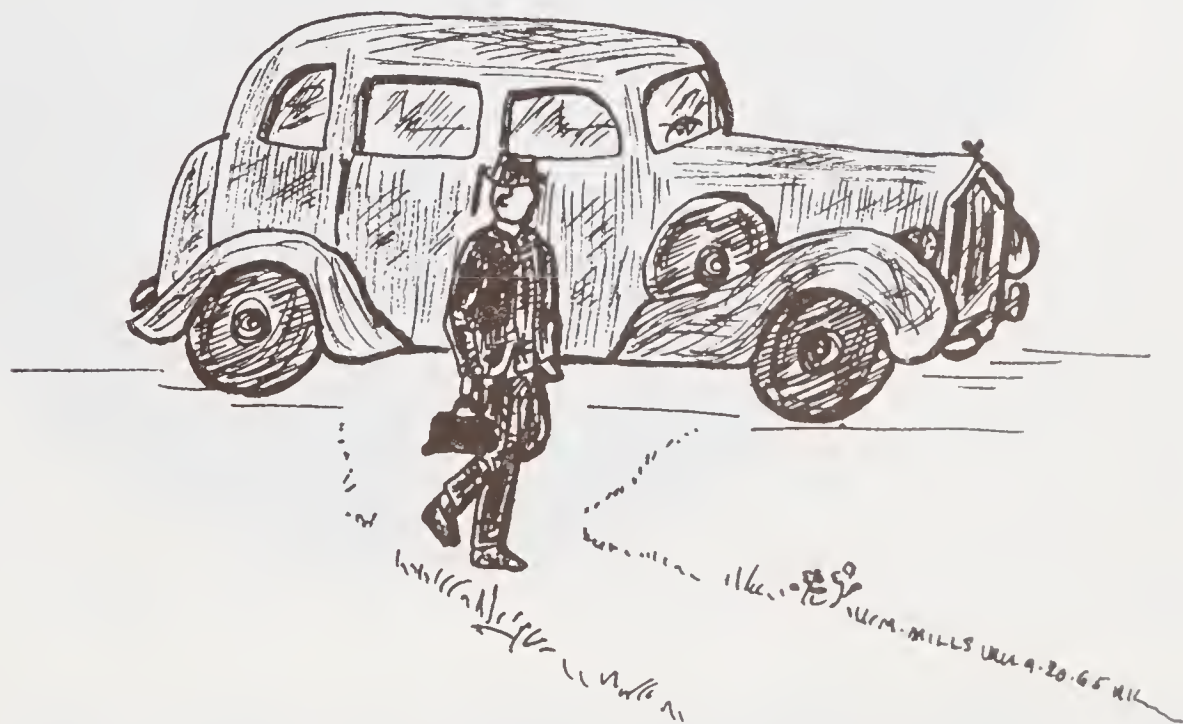
LILY POND







# Changing Century





*Dr. John Francis Shaffner, Jr.*



## Chapter

### 14.

#### “WITH A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE”

1874 - 1910

Bright, eager, and bubbling over with the joy of living, John Francis Shaffner, Jr. was a popular leader of the youth of Salem. The youngest son of Salem's prominent Dr. John F. Shaffner, he followed his father into the medical profession, becoming his associate in practice and in the family drugstore.

He attended the local Boy's School, and spent his leisure time in pursuit of sports and in the companionship of his classmates, who found the Shaffner home to be a place of ready welcome.

Following his graduation from the University of North Carolina, he became a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, earning his degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1899. Eager to try his medical wings, he assumed the responsibilities of a resident physician at the Easton Hospital, Eatson, Pennsylvania. Here he gained experience, and a lovely Lutheran Deaconess, Margaret Shroeder, on leave from her native Germany to work in an American hospital, added a gleam to the twinkle in his eyes. Romance brightened the dreary hospital corridors. They were married in Kassel, Germany, home village of the bride.

Dr. Shaffner had a special interest in the diseases of children and, although he did not limit his practice to pediatrics, he earned recognition as a “skilled doctor of children”. He had a fondness for the little folk, and a bedside manner which delighted them. It was known that he carried “stick-candy” with him for the benefit of his small patients, which perhaps accounts also for the keen pleasure his own children seemed to derive in accompanying him, in his buggy, on his round of house calls.

His sense of humor has been described as efflorescent, and he enjoyed playing harmless jokes on his family and friends. He obtained the services of a young pharmacist from South Carolina for his father's drugstore, whose German vocabulary was limited to “Ja” and “Nein”; consequently, he had a great deal of trouble understanding the German speaking “Oldsters” of Salem. Dr. Shaffner, noting the druggist's difficulties, led the German speaking residents to believe that he was from the “Old Country”, thus encouraging them to speak German exclusively when addressing him, and adding to the young man's dilemma for a brief while, until the prank was revealed.

He was a sensitive man, filled with compassion for his fellow beings, and in his love for fun and laughter, he was always careful not to offend another.

A tale had been told around Salem, that a certain eccentric Salem Professor, who had a cat and a kitten, cut a large hole and a small hole

into his house so that the two might come and go as they pleased. Naturally, the knowledge of this became a source of gleeful discussion among the Salem residents. "Didn't the professor know that the kitten could exit by the same hole the cat used?" Dr. Shaffner's diplomatic reply was, "When he says 'scat', he wants both of them out at once, not one waiting upon the other!"

The delightful and capable Dr. Shaffner, loved and respected by young and old, can be likened in many ways to the gentle Dr. Kaberlahn, beloved first Moravian doctor of North Carolina, and like Kaberlahn, who died of the fever in Bethania at the age of thirty-seven, he too was destined to die while still in his thirties. His death, attributed to a rheumatic ailment, resulting from a throat infection, occurred on March 24, 1910.







*Dr. Samuel Frederick Pfohl*



## Chapter

### 15.

#### “DR. FRED”

1871 - 1961

Samuel Frederick Pfohl, the last of Salem's physicians, began his medical career in the Horse and Buggy Era and practiced into the new age of scientific medicine. The consolidation of Winston and Salem made him one of the city's first physicians.

“Dr. Fred”, as he was affectionately called by most of his patients, was born in Salem to parents who were both descendents of pioneering Moravian families. His mother had taught at Salem College and Academy from 1859 to 1865.

At the Salem Boy's School, he was a serious, scholarly student. For a brief time before he began the study of medicine, he worked as a carpenter, but with the encouragement and counsel of his cousin, Dr. Siewers, he entered the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and graduated in 1893. An eagerness to learn was an integral part of his life, leading him to remain at the University for another year and to the undertaking of three years as a resident physician of the Boston Emergency Hospital to acquire clinical experience.

His first office was located in the home of his parents, but after his marriage in 1903, he moved into a home of his own (on South Main Street in Salem), and maintained an office there throughout his life, so that whatever free time he had he could spend with his family. His wife, Rose Haas, was a nurse whom he had met when she accompanied a patient from Baltimore, Maryland, to Salem for treatment.

A reluctant conversationalist, many anecdotes are told about his sparsity of speech; when asked why he did not talk more, he is reported to have replied: “What I don't say, I don't have to take back”. He had a unique sense of humor, which on occasion both delighted and surprised his patients. He once informed a charming, but talkative female patient that he had declined her offer to be his blood donor during a recent illness because he was afraid that if he were to be injected with her blood, he would start talking and never stop again!

The stories of his generosity are legion. He often paid for the medicine which he prescribed for the charity patients of the hospitals. He is known to have taken the blankets from his home and given them to needy patients on more than one occasion.

A modest, reticent man, Dr. Pfohl shunned publicity; one newspaper writer says of him:

“Though he was a man of few words, he conveyed love, understanding and selflessness in service which can be described, not as a profession, but as a ministry.”



He studied and read tirelessly; an intern once remarked ashamedly that he knew Dr. Pfohl spent more time in study than he did. He took time from his busy practice to return to the University of Pennsylvania Medical School to study Electrocardiography, and brought the first cardiograph machine to Winston-Salem in the early thirties. Although he was essentially a general practitioner, including obstetrics in his practice until he was in his late fifties, he gained wide respect as a cardiologist and consultant. The Patriarch of Medicine in Winston-Salem, he kept medical fees of the city low in comparison to other cities of relative size and economic stature by maintaining modest fees himself. He never sent out bills, depending solely on the conscience of his patients to prompt their paying.

A nature lover, he was especially fond of trees and it was not unusual to find him standing in silent admiration before one whose majestic beauty had caught his eye. He could be evoked to rare conversation if "Roan Mountain" was mentioned; the natural Rhodendron gardens at the summit of this mountain had been the objective of many family excursions until his failing health made such trips an impossibility.

For more than forty years he served as physician of Salem Academy and College, and for many years, he was a member of the Board of Trustees of both institutions. He was one of the first members of the Forsyth County Medical Society, and the staff of the City Memorial Hospital, joining in 1914, the year of its establishment.

"Dr. Fred" died on January 18, 1961, at the age of eighty-nine, leaving a record of continuous service as a physician for sixty years. His life of selflessness and consecrated devotion to the medical profession, to all who called upon him, the young physician needing guidance, the sick and the dying, rich and poor, will ever be a monument to him.



In the beginning was Dr. Kabersahn, who showed the way for the early Moravian settlers concerning medical knowledge and sanitary conditions which were some of the best known in his day. After him followed many good Moravian doctors who were not only men of medicine, but who contributed their time and talents in many ways to make the Moravian community as we know it today.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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